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ABSTRACT

This paper outlines an instructional paradigm which can be utilized in any learning environment and discusses four instructional strategies which can be implemented in the teaching of organizational communication within a given instructional system. The instructional system, as defined in this paper, is a collection of people and things that has the purpose of changing the capabilities of a group of students through learning and should be designed to insure that changes in student capabilities take place. The four general considerations for developing an instructional system are explained and so is the importance of role playing in developing an instructional paradigm for organizational communication. The usefulness of an internship for students majoring in organizational communication is also discussed. (RB)

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THE NATURE OF INSTRUCTION IN ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION

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Organizational communication is undoubtedly a rapidly growing field. Communication departments across the country are creating and implementing new courses in this area. Surveys by Wright and Sherman (1970) and Downs and Larimer (1973) verify this remarkable growth in the last few years.

Part of the reason for this growth is student demand for educational experiences which will have a direct bearing on future employment. Organizational communication, in a relevant way, can meet this student demand by providing unique learning experiences which go beyond traditional instructional formats.

Although the nature of instruction in organizational communication has potential for considerable flexibility, it is important to note that the instruction can remain within a general paradigm applicable to any learning situation.

It is not the design of this paper to develop an elaborate systems paradigm unique to the teaching of organizational communication. However, a description of a general instructional system and paradigm may provide us with a broad referent for the nature of instruction in any subject area. Instructional strategies particularly relevant to organizational communication can then be explored while being aware that they should remain within an instructional system.

The purpose of this paper then is twofold: 1) to outline an instructional paradigm which can be utilized in any learning environment, and 2) to discuss four instructional strategies which could be implemented in the teaching of organizational communication within a given instructional system. The instructional

system is defined here as a collection of people and things that has the purpose of changing the capabilities of a group of students through learning, and should be designed to insure that changes in student capabilities take place.

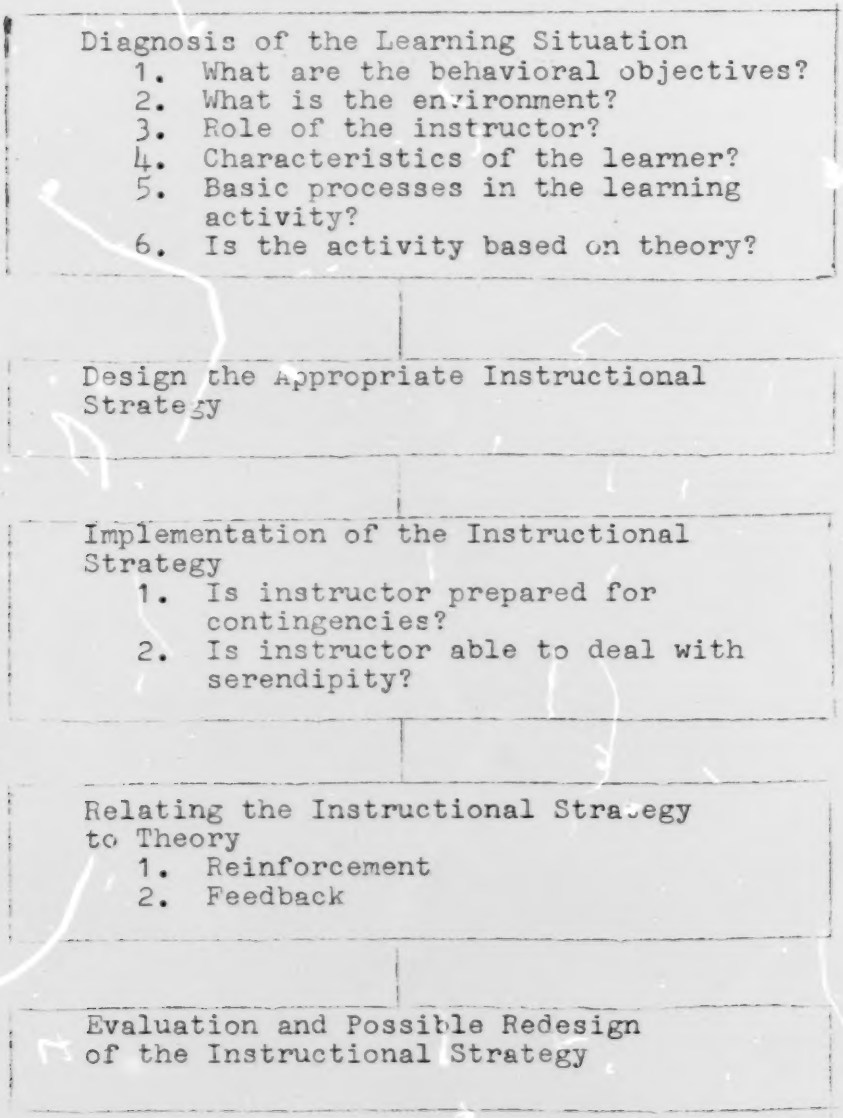
The four general considerations for developing an instructional system are:

1. How is the conceptual structure of the instruction described? (abstract/theoretical, or operationally-referenced terms).
2. What are the characteristics of the learning environment? What kind of enclosure do students operate in; what kinds of media employed, what part of the environment is formed by instructor activities, etc.?
3. How is the system managed? Does the instructor plan and organize the instructional events, or is this done by preplanning of a textbook author or course director? Is instruction designed for a group or for individuals? What determines how the student progresses, as he continues to learn?
4. What are the time characteristics of the system? Who controls instructional time, the instructor or the learner? Who determines the schedule for instruction? Are fixed time limits set for instructional activity, or are they flexible?

These four considerations in developing an instructional system can be very helpful when one wishes to design, carry out, and evaluate both learning and teaching in terms of specific

objectives. They also serve as a basepoint for the development of the following instructional paradigm below.

INSTRUCTIONAL PARADIGM
Fig. 1.


Diagnosis of the Learning Situation
1. What are the behavioral objectives?
2. What is the environment?
3. Role of the instructor?
4. Characteristics of the learner?
5. Basic processes in the learning activity?
6. Is the activity based on theory?
Design the Appropriate Instructional Strategy
Implementation of the Instructional Strategy
1. Is instructor prepared for contingencies?
2. Is instructor able to deal with serendipity?
Relating the Instructional Strategy to Theory
1. Reinforcement
2. Feedback
Evaluation and Possible Redesign of the Instructional Strategy

In any lea ning situation, regardless of the strategies used, the diagnosis, design, implementation and evaluation of the situation are inherent processes. After the learning situation is diagnosed, following the six points in the diagnosis phase, the design of the particular instructional strategy can take place. One of the first questions the instructor should ask himself during these two phases is "Why?" Based on my analysis of the learning environment, and my concern for the student's understanding of theory, why am I designing this activity? In other words, based on the needs of the students, what are the objectives that I wish to accomplish, and how do these objectives relate to theory?

Implementation of the strategy and relating the strategy to theory should take place within the same time period if possible. Interest and attention are enhanced by successful experiences. These, in turn, facilitate the learning process as they are seen as rewarding experiences. Closure should therefore be sought as often as possible during each class session. The student should experience "something" and also be given the opportunity to see how that experience relates to some theoretical base.

The evaluation and redesign stage of the above paradigm may be the most important. Short questionnaires can be used at the end of certain class periods or units, which essentially ask the students whether they learned anything from the strategy presented and if so, what? Evaluation by the instructor concerning the classroom experience should be made as soon as the class is over. Many of us who teach "know" when a class went well or poorly,

and if we are perceptive of the feedback, we can make fairly accurate judgments concerning why it went well or not. How many of us, upon leaving the classroom, have felt extremely satisfied or dissatisfied by the experience, but allowed our perceptions of the experience to slip away because we failed to evaluate and redesign the situation immediately.

While the above considerations and paradigm can relate to most learning environments, the emphasis of this paper is more specifically concerned with the teaching of organizational communication.

In our concern for the nature of instruction in organizational communication, we might broadly categorize the instructional system into internal activities and external activities. Internal activities consist, obviously, of many possibilities, but this paper will limit them to case studies and role playing. External activities will be limited to internships and field research.

Each activity will be viewed according to 1) definition, 2) characteristics, 3) guidelines, 4) advantages, 5) limitations.

CASE STUDIES

Definition: a case may be defined as a written (usually) description of an actual or hypothetical situation which is usually presented in some detail.

Characteristics of Cases:

1. Cases are usually designed to highlight certain aspects of a given situation.
2. A case with a central theme that is not directly communication related will usually omit the complexities of

personalities and interaction behavior of key personnel.

3. In the same way, communication related cases tend to focus on the personalities, needs, interactions and relationships of key personnel.
4. The technical and total situation is usually absent or minimized in order to disect a "total situation" into teachable units.

Guidelines for Cases

A general guideline to follow in the selection of cases are the following:

1. What are the specific goals of the class session?
2. What is the students' knowledge of the technical setting and language in a given case?
3. What is the length of the case compared to the time available for its study and discussion?
4. Can the case relate to theoretical principles?
5. Does the case contain indications of the historical setting of the problem?
6. Does the case contain the individuals' background and their interrelationships? This may vary in degree from case to case.
7. Is material included which may be irrelevant to the student?
8. Are alternative courses of action open to the students, depending on their experience and diagnosis? Is the "answer" obvious?
9. Will various actions proposed lead to other consequences? Can they be evaluated and discussed?

Advantages of Cases

1. Cases can be used to illustrate particular points covered in a lecture.
2. Students can test the principles presented.
3. Students can readily see how others would deal with a given situation.
4. Many different principles can be integrated into a single case.
5. Cases can be used to stimulate discussion and increase student involvement.
6. Cases can serve as tests of what the student has learned from other presentations.
7. Cases help the students develop a rational process for dealing with organizational communication.

Limitations of Cases

1. When cases are combined with a lecture, and the lecture takes the largest portion of the class period, the students may develop a passive role which becomes difficult to change.
2. There may not be enough time to deal with the process of analyzing specific situations.
3. There may be a lack of involvement because of the irrelevancy of the topic.

Generally, the occasional use of cases in organizational communication courses can be very effective in exemplifying theory and allowing the student to develop in his ability to analyze and deal with specific principles and issues.

ROLE PLAYING

Definition: Role playing is defined as directed, spontaneous human interaction which simulates real life behavior.

Characteristics of Role Playing

The characteristics of roleplaying are essentially based on the conflict between a protagonist and antagonist. The instructor should point out those identifying attributes which usually belong to each of the roles. The job of resolving conflict is the responsibility of the roleplayers, not the instructor. His function is to facilitate learning, not to judge the rightness or wrongness of the roles. Below is a list of desirable/undesirable behaviors which can be used as a guide for the roleplay (Engel, 1973)

Protagonist

1. The one who carries the burden or responsibility for decision-making.
2. He has the power or authority to act, or to reconcile a conflict.
3. He generally outranks the antagonist.
4. The one to whom the issue is presented.
5. The roleplayer who is on the "hot seat."
6. The one who supports or advocates a position when seeking to solve a problem.

Protagonist: Desirable Behavior

1. Listens
2. Open-minded
3. Noncritical
4. Nondirective
5. Nondogmatic
6. Supportive
7. Focuses on problem
8. Sincere
9. Looks at antagonist

Protagonist: Undesirable Behavior

1. Talks excessively
2. Pitches his approach to "sell" his point of view
3. Fails to listen
4. Close-minded
5. Shows displeasure
6. Argues
7. Sarcastic
8. Insincere
9. Doesn't look at antagonist

Antagonist

1. Generally one who is subordinate to the protagonist
2. One who is the aggrieved party
3. One who is displeased with some action, past or present, or likely to be taken in the future
4. One who is unconvinced
5. One who challenges the authority of the protagonist
6. One adversely affected by some action
7. One who may be frightened

Antagonist Behavior

Normally, the antagonist will, at the outset, reveal behaviors reflecting the requirements of the assigned role. The following are typical behaviors:

1. Talks excessively
2. Needles
3. Sullen
4. Exhibits facial expressions of unhappiness or displeasure
5. Critical or sarcastic
6. Argues

It is important to note that the above behaviors should come about naturally as the student becomes part of the role. The instructor should not state precisely how the antagonism or other behaviors should be expressed within the roleplay. If during the pre-role briefing, the instructor tells the antagonist that he is to be angry about...whatever the situation involves, he should not go further by advising the antagonist to perform specific behaviors in the expression of that anger. Behaviors should evolve through the role play.

When planning the use of s roleplay, time allotments are very important. Time must be alloted for each of the following procedures:

1. The instruction and bridge to previous class session.
2. Setting the scene for the roleplay
3. Briefing the roleplayers and related arrangements for the roleplay selection.
4. The roleplay itself
5. Discussion and relation with theory or skill involved
6. Summar.

Roleplaying has many options which are very effective. Various methods such as multiple or concurrent roleplays, overt and covert roleplays, alter egos, role reversal are merely a few possible alternatives.

Guidelines for Role Playing

The same guidelines concerning the selection of cases stated above can also be applicable for the selection of roleplays. However, there are other guidelines one can follow: (Zoll 1969)

1. The role should have a real meaning for the one assuming it.
2. The role should not be too unfamiliar, and should be within student's capability to handle.
3. The main ideas about the role should be included in the instruction, but with limited detail.
4. A minimum of past relationships, feelings, past conversations, etc. should be included. To much of this information make it difficult to assume a role.

Advantages of Roleplaying

1. It permits practice of a skill. It is particularly effective when dealing with interviewing, conference situations, superior/subordinate relationships, etc.
2. It demonstrates situations for discussion.
3. It offers opportunities to try out proposed or intended action.
4. It exemplifies an abstract idea or process.
5. It is a means by which empathy can be developed.

Limitations of Roleplaying

1. A participative method of this nature could prove to be a traumatic experience for some.
2. Students (as well as the instructor) might possibly view roleplaying as merely "fun and games."
3. There is a tendency for participants to act in ways which are more of a reaction to observers rather than sincerely taking on the role assigned, and making a genuine effort to behave as if the action were "real."
4. Participants may not empathize or understand the role.

Intergration of Case Studies and Role Play Situations

Roleplaying fits in very well with the use of cases. On the following page are different sequences in which case materials and more traditional formats can be used in combination with various role playing models: (Angel, 1973).

Sequence A

1. Lecture
2. Lecture/Discussion
3. Case Study
4. Group Evaluations
5. Summary/Discussion

Sequence B

1. Case Study
2. Group Evaluations/Report
3. Lecture/Discussion
4. Summary

Sequence C

1. Lecture
2. Case Study
3. Roleplay (based on case)
4. Lecture/Discussion
5. Summary

Sequence D

1. Case Study
2. Roleplay (based on case)
3. Lecture/Discussion
4. Summary

Sequence E

1. Case Study
2. Group Discussion of case
3. Group Reports
4. Concurrent Roleplays
5. Group Discussion of Results
6. Summary

Sequence F

1. Case Study
2. Group Discussion of case
3. Group Reports
4. Concurrent Roleplays
5. Concurrent Roleplays - Reverse Roles
6. Group Discussion of Results
7. Summary

INTERNSHIPS IN ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION

Definition: The internship in organizational communication is defined as a period of service which calls for practical, and intensive student involvement in the activities of a specified organization. This involvement may take the form of conducting research or participating in organizational activities which mutually benefit the student in specific learning, and the organization in meeting its objectivies.

Characteristics of the Internships

At the University of Maryland, internships are taken for academic credit during one or more semesters. An average of ten hours per week should be spent at the client organization for a student to earn three hours of academic credit.

Because of the decreased demand for speech communication teachers in the marketplace, internships have become more relevant for students as well as academicians. They provide the student with practical, on-the-job experience in numerous communication-related settings, and opportunities for career decisions through increased awareness and preparation.

Students majoring in organizational communication at the University of Maryland have participated in internships by working directly with the director of communication in a major organization, have developed in-house newsletters, have written stories and done lay-outs for in-house newsletters, conducted attitude research, readership surveys, interviewed personnel, and have functioned as liaisons between interdependent departments within the client

organization. An on-going internship is now in progress with the Civil Service Commission, where the student functions as a representative of Training and Development, and interviews training officers at other agencies who are duplicating some of the training efforts. The primary objective of the internship is to establish a clearinghouse activity designed to centralize much of the training efforts. This internship provides the student with interviewing experience, and a working knowledge of government training and development, a particularly negotiable area of employment for an organizational communication major.

Guidelines and Specific Characteristics of the Internship

The three key people in each internship are the academic advisor/coordinator, the field coordinator, and, of course, the student. After the instructor (academic advisor/coordinator) makes initial contact with a client organization to determine the organization's needs, he then selects a student whom he feels meets the academic, emotional, and motivational requirements for the activity. It is important to mention that the needs of the client organization must be very clear, and the capabilities of the student intern must be known well enough so that the meeting of the internship goals can be assured.

Once an affirmative judgment has been made about the organization's needs and the selected student's capabilities a contract is negotiated between the three parties involved. The contract states the specific nature, objectives, and

responsibilities of the internship, and the number of hours per week the student is expected to work. Upon completion of the internship, the student is required to submit a detailed account of his activities at the client organization. This account is evaluated by the academic advisor and discussed with the student. A letter from the field coordinator is also requested. It is sent directly to the academic advisor, who makes a copy for the student, to be placed in his personal portfolio.

Advantages of the Internship

The benefits of the internship are obvious. It provide the student with opportunities he would never be able to experience in the classroom. He is able to move away from the simulated activities in the classroom to the "real world problems of communication in organizations. He has the opportunity to become a participant observer of the ongoing activities relationships, and their impact on organizatio al goals.

Further, it provides the student with a better awarenes of career objectives and interests. Pragmatically, it also provides an opportunity for contact with professionals who could give the student insights into specific career goals. For example, an intern in organizational communication was employed by a Federal agency full time last summer, and is in a good position for employment upon graduation.

Internships have also developed into field research projects within the client organizations.

Limitation of the Internship

My preference is to extend my bias further by suggesting that internships are, an absolute necessity for a progressive program in organizational communication.

It should be noted that internships are time-consuming, with no release time for the instructor, but the advantages far out-weigh those limitations.

FIELD RESEARCH IN ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION

Definition: Redding (1970) defines a field study as

> .....any kind of research carried out in a specified locale which is perceived by perceivers (particularly the subjects) as being free of significant researcher related deviations from everyday life. It may have any conceivable design, any conceivable controls, and any conceivable data gathering techniques available in the entire repertory of science. A field study per se is neither more nor less scientific than a so-called laboratory study.

Characteristics of Field Research in Organizational Communication

The opportunities for conducting research in organizations are virtually unlimited. Organizational communication courses lend themselves to this type of activity more than any other. Conducting field research has proven to be extremely productive and gratifying both from this writer's perspective and the students'. It allows both instructor and students to pursue their research interests in a "real life" organization, and provides immeasurable experiences in the actual conduct of research, including instrument development, pilot testing, statistical procedures and analysis, computer operations, and data presentation. These kinds of activities could prove invaluable to students interested in organizations

communication by exposing them to literature review, and research procedures which go beyond the classroom environment. By being part of the total process, students see more relevancy in their involvement, and are naturally more committed to the completion of the research, because of their intricate involvement in the decision-making and much of the direction.

Guidelines in Selection of Client Organization and Instructional Strate

There are several crucial factors which an instructor must be concerned with prior to conducting a course designed as a practicum in field research:

1. Establish contact with a client organization--Make every effort to contact the individual who is in a position to make a decision concerning entry. Time is too valuable to waste negotiating with an organizational representative who does not have the power to grant permission to do the research.

2. Be sure you can meet some need of the organization--The negotiation stage can be substantially more successful if you can establish a capability of meeting the organization's needs.

3. Don't try to promise too much--Sometimes, because an instructor needs an organization for the conduct of research, there may be the tendency to promise results which are beyond the capabilities or the scope of the project. It is important to realize exactly what the capabilities of the students are prior to contacting the organization, as well as the support facilities available (paper, reproduction facilities, typists, computer services, key punching, etc.). It should be remembered that the student and the instructor are providing a service which is free of charge to

the client organization. It has been my experience that most organizations are pleased to receive qualified assistance which meets their needs, withour having to provide much, if any, financial support.

4. The nature of the research project must be clear to all parties involved. The client organization needs to know exactly what the research team is going to be researching, how the data is to be collected, time parameters and organizational constraints. The instructor and students need to know exactly what their responsibilities are gong to be throughout the research project. All three parties, the organization, the students, and the instructor, need to know what each of the other party's expectations are, so that a mutuality of understanding is existant.

5. A guarartee needs to be made concerning anonymity--Sometimes, because of the nature of the data, there may be concern about its anonymity. This should <u>always</u> be guaranteed, and should be adhered to at all times by everyone involved.

6. Clarification of responsibility for costs--It has been my experience that the client organization is willing to assume certain costs such as postage, stationery, and reproduction. This is not always the case, however. Be sure financial requirements are mutually understood from the beginning.

7. Students should have as much opportunity as possible for participating in the decision-making processes throughout the semester--Maier(1963) and many others have reported that groups will be more committed to those decisions which they participated in making. Instructors must do much of the initial work and

establish some parameters, but this instructional strategy should be designed in such a way that the students will carry most of the responsibility while the instructor acts more as a resourse.

Advantages of Doing Field Research in Organizational Communication Classe

It really isn't necessary to expound on the advantages of this type of instructional strategy. It is an exciting way of dealing with theoretical concerns in a realistic, and measurable way. It is also an opportunity to deal with theory in a measurable way. The outcomes are real and tangible. A document is written which essentially comprises the "fruits of our efforts." Few traditional classes offer that opportunity.

It also allows a student to learn how to conduct research in a relevant way. In my estimation, the best way to learn how to do research is to do it. A group effort is also the best way to begin. When mistakes are made, the responsibility for them is often diffused throughout the group. Students learn from each other as well as from the instructor. I have found it an extremely gratifying pursuit.

Limitations of Doing Field Research in Organizational Communication Class

Again, my biases will be expressed here. Obviously, there are some limitations, but in my estimation, the benefits are far greater than the liabilities. However, some of the potential problems are:

1. Intra/intergroup conflict: This became very evident in the first practicum taught. After the final report was completed, the students were asked to write an analysis of their group as a "newly formed organization." They

were to look at those variables which they felt impinged on the successful completion of their task.

2. Individual Student Competencies: A course of this nature necessitates a fairly homogeneous group of students. It should therefore be taken on a "permission only" basis, by those students who have taken a course in organizational communication previously, or a similar course from another department.
3. Inequities in Individual Output: This problem is bound to occur to some degree because we are all living in our own "perceptual reality." The instructor needs to be cognizant of this occuring, but, in my estimation, he should not interfere. He should allow group pressure take its toll. Secondly, the development of a positive attitude toward goal achievement is important to initiate from the very begining.

If a course of this nature is 1) planned well in the beginnin and 2) executed with an emphasis on goal achievement, 3) if the instructor is willing to adjust to potential variations in format, and 4) work a great deal with his students in an informal setting, then field research can be extremely worthwhile for all involved.

Possible Syllabus for Field Research Seminar

Organization and implementation of this research strategy must be as thorough as possible. Below is an example of an actual "syllabus" distributed to my organizational communication seminar last year.

To: Speech 724 Students
Fr: Ray Falcione
Re: Syllabus for Spring Semester, 1974

As most of you already know, the Spring Semester, 1974 offering of Speech 724 will be entirely devoted to the execution of field research at _____. The decision to devote the seminar to this purpose grew out of: 1) my own feeling that a practical application and investigation of the theoretical concern discussed in Speech 424 would be an extremely worthwhile endeavor for students; 2) a request from Mr._____, director of communications at _____ to conduct an internal communicatio study in his organization.

The purpose of this memorandum is to outline the instructiona strategy developed for this semester.

1. Persons enrolled in the seminar will operate as a research team whose specific task will be to develop and administer questionnaires concerning various communication variables (I'll be more specific about this) to _____ employees, code the data, conduct a thorough analysis of the data, write a group paper, which will include a thorough review of literature, methodology and procedures, results and possible recommendations. The results and recommendations will then be presented to the company's executives.
2. The research team will be given access to two types of resources upon which they may draw for assistance: 1) Myself. I will recommend readings, provide lectures, and in general, offer requested advice; 2) Yourselves. Each of you has expertise which varies in degree and direction. Please work together as a mutually interdependent group to attain the objective. We should all make effective use of our varied abilities; 3) if we decide to follow up on the questionnaire with interviews, students enrolled in Speech 422 (Interviewing) will assis in collecting data by means of face to face interviews.
3. Below is a schedule of activities and assignments which we should adhere to this semester:
   a. Jan. 9 (9:15 a.m.) I will meet with _____ to determine accessability dates, variables to be investigated, procedures for data collection, and other parameters.
   b. Jan. 10 (7-9 p.m.) I will present the results of my discussion with _____ and show you the tentative scales to be employed in the research.
   c. Jan.17 (7-9 p.m.) Final rough draft of data-gathering instrument will be submitted to you. This will be reevaluated with modifications made if necessary. Specific details will be outlined for data-collection.
   d. Jan. 21: Data collection will be made for the pilot study.
   e. Jan. 24: Analysis of data from pilot study. Modification of instrument.
   f. Jan. 31 - Feb. 21: Data collection. We will meet on a regular class basis during this period. General literature reviews will be made during this period.

g. Feb. 21 - Mar. 28: Coding and analysis of data, completed rough draft of written report.
h. April 25: Final draft of written report.
i. Week of April 29: Presentation of report to client organization.
j. Fall back in total exhaustion and if you can raise your arm and bend your elbow---have a drink(s)!

Since this instructional strategy is obviously intended to stimulate "real world" types of research experiences in which some of you are likely to become involved, no parameters other than those stated above will be imposed on the research team (hopefully I will respond to the group's requests rather than imposing my ideas on you. I will make myself availabe to the group during the class meetings, (at your request) when needed, and during my posted office hours. My office number is 1231 and the telephon number is 454-2541.

In general, the task is yours. Work together. Do whatever needs to be done to meet the commitments and deadlines using your resources judiciously.

Summary

Whether the above four instructional strategies are implemented or other formats are used, the paradigm consisting of diagnosis, design, implementation, relation to theory, evaluation and redesign constitute an appropriate and useful system.

The nature of instruction in organization communication can take many forms. This paper has considered four that have particular utility in learning about communication in organization They provide opportunities for skill improvement without sacrificing the learning of theory.

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